Opera House Programs Found

Star-T- 9-15-57

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

Written and printed material, invaluable to historians, is being destroyed in some manner every day. An excellent example of this terrible waste of historical material is the theme for my column today.

Rescued from our city dump were several old programs from the Grand Opera House dated 1899 to 1902. Even earlier was the 1894 program of the Hagan Opera House in St. Louis. Most interesting of all were the programs for the year 1891, bound together with string, of Terre Haute's famous Naylor's Opera House.

Dorothy J. Clark

Some people ask: "Well, I can't see why old theater programs are so valuable?" As far as monetary value is concerned, they are not valuable except to an avid collector. But to history-minded people, the advertisements printed in these programs are very valuable. They demonstrate the lives and times in which the people lived over 60 years ago. That there have been many changes is very evident. My younger readers find them a source of amusement, while my older readers in remembering, feel a hint of nostalgia for the "good old days."

To show you what can be learned from some of these old programs, we read that in 1891, Jacob Bauer's Drug Store was at 701 and 703 Wabash avenue. P. J. Kaufman (better known as "Buff") at the corner of Seventh and Wabash was listed as a "fancy grocer." Mr. J. N. Hickman, 306 Wabash, was the representative for the White sewing machine.

A box ad stated: "That party sitting next to you is a Fool! Unless he bought his underwear from Schluer. Ask him." What a way that would have been to strike up a conversation with a stranger!

Theater Party Coach.

The Fashion Livery had "the only theater party coach in the city; the latest, new and ample room for 4 couples or 8 passengers. Order from Wm. A. Hunter, 512, 514 and 516 Cherry street."

James Hunter and Co's. Steam Laundry was running a contest. For the best guesses on the number of collars in a locked show case at 523 Main street, they were awarding as first prize a $135 Victor Safety Bicycle; second prize a $70 solid sole leather trunk; third prize a $45 lady's gold watch.

At 417 Wabash, opposite the Opera House, was J. E. Cassady's establishment specializing in liquors, cigars, Pabst beer, billiards and pool.

At 425 Wabash was Sage's Restaurant which announced the opening of oyster season. The ladies' dining room was upstairs.

Dancing Arcade.

Oskar Duenweg advertised his dancing arcade at 665½ Wabash as the place to learn the new and popular Quadrille, the Oxford minuet, Spanish, Yorke and Hungarian dances. He specified that an introduction or reference was required from strangers.

Wilson Naylor, manager of the Opera House, had a very strict rule. "Children in arms not admitted, but when parents insist on their entry they must withdraw immediately upon their making the slightest disturbance, their money being refunded. The comfort of the remainder of the patrons demands this, and it must be strictly adhered to."

Myers Bros. at Fourth and Main were having a 20 per cent discount sale on overcoats. They advertised children's overcoats at 89 cents; boy's overcoats at $1.49 and men's at $2.12. Shirts were made to order for $1.25.

1891 patrons of the theater were warned to "Stop that old, hacking cough before it is too late," by using Dr. Olin's compound syrup of tolu and tar.

For Nov., 1891, Myers Bros. Clotheirs had an unusual ad—"Short and Stout men, isn't it annoying to have your coat ride up onto your neck? Coats cut especially to fit men with big corporations. Trousers to fit long and short-legged men."

Nisbet & McMinn, undertakers at 103 North Fourth street, announced that they were "open day and night."

Headquarters for Santa.

The Fair at 325 Main was described as being "the only Santa Claus headquarters in the city." Fisbeck's, 311 Wabash, had "new and nobby bedroom and parlor suits, sideboards and tables." Even as now, Hulman's was offering their Dauntless Coffee as "it has no equal."

Theodore W. Barhydt, Jr., became manager of the Grand Opera House in November, 1897, just after the building had been completed. He was very strict about ladies removing their big hats in the theatre. Nearly every program had some such warning. Patrons could also rent opera glasses from the ushers for a 25-cent fee.

Jenney & Singhurst at 23 North Seventh sold and repaired bicycles. They invited show-goers to "leave your wheel with us until after the show—no charge."

The Latest Hits.

E. T. Hulman, 642 Main street, said, "Watch this space for the latest vocal and instrumental hits. Here are a few: 'Go Away Back & Sit Down' and 'Night & Day' by Eugene Cowles; 'Indeed' and 'Cupid Might Have Been a Little Coon.'" This store sold sheet music, musical instruments, phonographs and records, photographic material and rented music boxes.

At 19 South Sixth was "The Bank," whose president, Dode Check, advised: "Don't let whiskey get the best of you, get the best of it at Dodes."

The only chewing gum sold in the theatre was White's Yucatan Gum. Mewhinney Candies were sold in the theatre also. Nothing was mentioned about our modern day popcorn.

Remember McPeak's?

The Columbian Laundry, Eleventh and Main, with Chas. E. McKeen as manager had a box ad. W. L. McPeak, operated a lunch room at 627 Main in 1898. J. M. McPeak, the up-to-date restaurant man, was located opposite the Terre Haute House at 713 Wabash.

Root's advertised "special bulk perfumery, sold from the original large gallon container direct from the still, without fancy labels, packages to add to the cost. We even give you the bottle. Four new special odors at 25 cents per ounce."

Also in 1898 Alex Sandison, 677 Main, offered "285 gallons 7-year-old port and sherry wines in my large casks, which I will deliver to any part of the city in jugs or bottles at the extremely low price of $1.00 gallon. Wine is indispensable in the sick room and fast becoming a fad for social purposes."

Teeth For $5.

Dr. H. C. Medcraft, corner Seventh and Main, advertised a set of teeth for $5, his best set of teeth for $8. Gold alloy fillings were 75 cents and all work was warranted and kept in repair for 5 years!"

I appeal to anyone who is contemplating throwng away any old records, books, papers, magazines, letters, cards, pictures or anything at all that might help history researchers, to please contact this writer first. Let's save our local history whenever possible!

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Horse Racing in the Gay Nineties

8-17-55-T

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

The Terre Haute Gazette of September, 1891, re lated the exciting news that "stables of fast horses are arriving daily for race week." The fairgrounds were being put in shape and all the improvements on the grounds had been completed. The streetcar people had put in twenty-five incandescent lights under the amphitheatre and would furnish the power. The new starter and judges' stands were called "beauties." The old judges' stands was to be used for a bandstand and had been moved back from the stretch about 75 feet.

W. P. Ijams had received a telegram from Go vernor Merriam of Minnesota and Mr. Pillsbury who were coming here in their special cars for race week. The hotels were already full.

was a race matinee scheduled at the track when a number of horses were to go for the record.

Dorthy J. Clark.

There were so many horses in the stables of Warren Park, Edgewood Farm, Thos. Dickerson and others, that there were plenty of starters. An interesting time was promised and the public invited.

The stable of M. E. McHenry of Genesseo, Illinois, included Charleston, 2:14, and Labasco 2:16½, two of the most famous horses in the country. From Cambridge City, Bob Stewart's string included Walter E., Grant's Abdallah, Ryland T., and Eva Wilkes.

The next day's news reported that Nancy Hanks, the famous Kentucky mare, had knocked another point off her record at Richmond, lowering her 2:09 mark.

Track Preparation.

By October 5 the grounds and track were reported in fine shape. The flags were floating gaily from numerous flagstaffs. The bar and lunchstands underneath the grandstand were set for trade. The grounds were "as green as emerald."

Beginning Saturday noon, the sale of seats began. For four days previously, the 26 boxes containing 212 seats had already been sold. In addition, the 476 chairs back of the boxes had been reserved for the nominal sum of 25 cents. Thousands and thousands of seats, free of any extra charge, were open to the public.

Visitors from all over the United States, horse lovers and racing fans, famous drivers, breeders, and sports writers from all the big city newspapers were in attend-

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ance. The races were called for 1:30 o'clock in the afternoon, and the program included the Wabash two-year-old stake, valued at $1,600; the 2:16 pace and the Hal Pointer-Direct match race.

It was always a thrill to see Axtell, still king of the trotters. Although he was not being raced, he was shown on the track in harness. Th reports were that offers of more than $6,000 had been refused for Car't Tell, a yearling full sister to Axtell. She was valued at $10,000. Drextel, a four-month-old full brother to Axtell was so promising that $12,000 had been offered for him.

On October 8, Nancy Hanks failed to break the record of Maud S, only running 2:11 ¾ and the record was 2:08¾.

Gambling at Track.

Gambling must have been quite an important part of horse racing in those days, as ten croupiers were employed to handle the wheels of fortune and the Hieronymus tables. Legalized gambling at the track was frowned upon by some of the city fathers, however. They felt it was taking too much money out of the city.

Perhaps this was the reason the banks closed for a half-day holiday on race days, or maybe it was only to allow the employes to see the races along with all their fellow townspeople. To prove that the races of 1891 were well-attended, the recepits of only one day equalled the receipts of the entire meeting of 1890.

On Margaret avenue, just east of the intersection with Road 63, in Honey Creek Township, is Warren Park Farm, now owned by the Richard W. Benbridges. She was formerly Alice Ijams, daughter of W. P. Ijams and granddaughter of Levi Gale Warren, the organizer and first president of the old State Bank.

Fabulous Axtell.

Southeast of the big home is the burial place of the famous horse, Axtell, purchased by W. P. Ijams for the fabulous price of $105,000. The grave is marked with an evergreen tree and a large boulder. To the east of his grave is Axtell's red brick private stable, complete with his personal groom's quarters. The small building was later converted to a dwelling, but the extra wide front doors are still apparent through which the famous horse and sulky could be driven into the barn.

Axtell was described as " a rich bay with large star and snip, 16 hands high, weighing 1,200 pounds, and foaled in 1886." He won national recognition as a two-year-old trotter, going 2:33. Then he became world renowned in 1889 when he set the record of 2:12 as a three-year-old, and was retired to stud. This record, made with an old-fashioned high-wheeled sulky, a crude affair compared with modern day standards, having neither rubber tires nor ball bearings, stood for seventeen years.

The colored groom who traveled all over the world with Axtell, was "Joe" Duffy, a faithful worker for the Ijams family for over sixty-five years until his death.

Son of Axtell.

Axworthy, a son of Axtell, was born and bred at the Warren Park Farm, and trained at the Terre Haute track till three years old, when he started out to win honors by making a three-year-old record of 2:05½. An injury took him off the track, and he was sold for $500. Many thought the price was too high at that, but Axworthy became known as one of the great sires of trotting colts, among them General Watts, who trotted a mile in 2:06¼, lowering the record for three-year-olds. The fame of Nancy Hanks is associated with the Terre Haute track.

It has been said that the great horse Axtell did more to make Terre Haute famous than all our industries put together. Horsemen from all over the country frequently visit the Warren Park Farm to view the grave of Axtell, asking for pictures of the famous horse, and enjoying the conversation about his great races, his trotting record, and his many famous descendants.

Popular Dowling Hall Opened 104 Years Ago

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

Community Affairs File

One hundred and four years ago Dowling Hall was opened for "theatricals, minstrels, lectures, balls, panoramas, and all respectable amusements, by the night, week, or longer periods. Ample scenery for all purposes." This was located on North Sixth Street where the Forrest Sherer Agency is now in the Chanticleer Building.

M. W. O'Connell was the wholesale and retail bookseller, stationer and general news agent at 104 Main Street, between Fourth and Fifth Streets (remember, this was before the house numbering was changed to the present system). Mr. O'Connell did picture framing to order and was agent for the Cincinnati daily papers.

Mrs. Louisa Volger sold hoop skirts and corsets, velvet and silk ribbons, notions, trimmings, jewelry and buttons, ladies' and children's wearing apparel and toilet goods at No. 17 So. 4th, five doors south of the Post Office.

Enos Strouse sold gentlemen's clothing and hats, saps, trunks, valises, etc., at No. 126 Main, between Fourth and Fifth.

Jacob Engle and J. P. Tutt manufactured boots and shoes at 107 Main Street, between Fourth and Fifth.

DOROTHY J. CLARK

Cox & Son, wholesale grocers, sold liquors, tobaccos, cigars, tea, fish, salt, coal oil, etc., at 148 and 150 Main Street.

C. Wittig & Company sold dry goods and notions at No. 73 Main, opposite McKeen's Bank.

John R. Freeman was an importer and dealer in American and Swiss watches, jewelry and silverware.

Nathan and Joseph Erlanger were clothiers at No. 93 Main Street, next door to Edsall & Company. When Adolph Herz came to Terre Haute in 1867, he worked in the establishment of Joseph Erlanger, merchant tailor. Herz opened his own store on South Fourth, between Main and Ohio, in 1869, and called it the Herz Bazaar.

H. H. Bingham & Company conducted a mill-furnishing house on East Main Street, on the Canal near the E. & C.R.R. freight depot. A millwright and builder of flouring mills, woolen mills, saw mills, etc., they sold everything from a mill pick to a six-run mill.

G. Foster Smith sold tinner's stock and stoves and manufacturing tin, sheet-iron and copper on the east side of the public square, one door south of Main Street.

Uriah Jeffers and Henry Miller were commission merchants and sold notions, combs and fancy goods, thread, hosiery, suspenders, hair-nets, soaps, cigars, etc., at 156 Main Street.

The Teutonia Hotel and Restaurant, operated by William Schaffer at Nos. 174 and

Continued On Page 5, Col. 1.

Dorothy Clark

Continued From Page 4.

176 Main Street, near Sixth, was new and elegantly furnished in 1868. The large billard room attached to the hotel boasted of six of the finest tables.

James Seath, John B. Hager and Henry H. Beach owned the Vigo Foundry and Machine Works located near the T.H.&I. and the E.&C. Rail road Freight Depots. They manufactured steam engines, millgearing, iron and brass castings, etc.

Cole Brothers & Brockway had a factory near the railroad depot where they manufactured wooden pumps and drain tubing.

Herman Hulman & Company were wholesale grocers at the corner of Fifth and Main streets.

James B. Lyne and Thomas E. Lawes were general commission merchants on Main Street near the corner of Seventh. They specialized in pure Kentucky copper-distilled whiskey.

B. H. Cornwell, A. G. Austin, D. B. Otis and J. G. Shryer were hardware dealers at No. 160 Main, opposite the National House at the southwest corner of Sixth and Wabash.

O. Bartlett and J. B. Austin sold books and stationery at No. 101 Main and "guaranteed Cincinnati prices." In 1869 Benjamin G. Cox purchased the old Bartlett Book Store which was so prominent in early times.

At the sign of the tin ball, R. L. Ball sold stoves, tin and copper on Main Street between Fourth and Fifth.

James M. Lyons offered shelf and heavy hardware, carriage trimmings and wagon stock, mechanics' tools and building materials, crosscut saws, files, oils, whang, guns, pistols and cartridges, fishing tackle, rifle and blasting powder, paints, oils varnished and broom goods. This fascinating store was at No. 130 Main Street.

At the corner of First and Poplar was the Anchor Flouring Mill and the Steam Barrel and Stave Factory of R. L. Thompson.

At the corner of First and Wabash was the Carriage Manufactory of Scott, Oren

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& Company. They offered barouches, park phaetons, physicoians, phaetons, Prince Alberts, Rockaways, open buggies, shifting top buggies along with Grant's Patent and Spring Wagons.

North of the Terre Haute House on Seventh Street was Nathan Mengel's Prairie City Brewery which turned out lager beer, ale and common beer.

There were at least twenty newspapers in the Wabash Valley in 1868. They included the Charleston Courier and Plain Dealer in Charleston, Ill.; Greencastel Weekly Flag.

THE TRIBUNE-STAR, TERRE H

Indiana Press and Putnam Republican Banner in Greencastle; Home Weekly and Manufacturer and Miner at Brazil; Hoosier State at Newport; Marshall Messenger at Marshall, Ill.; Owen County Journal and Owen County Union at Spencer; Parke County Republican at Rockville; Prairie Beacon and Wabash Valley Times at Paris, Ill.; Sullivan County Union and Sullivan Democrat at Sullivan; Weekly Aurora Borealis at Bowling Green and local papers.

Dowling Hall Opened Here Dec. 15, 1864

File

By DOROTHY J. CLARK — DEC 16 1973

The opening of Dowling Hall on the night of Dec. 15, 1864, opened a new era in the history of the amusement of Terre Haute. According to the newspaper reporter, "Our city for a long time has felt the want of a public hall or lecture room of sufficient capacity to accommodate its fast growing population.

"Although our place will compare favorably with any other in the State, in taste and neatness of its buildings, private residences and for business purposes, we have for many years been most lamentably behind our sister cities in providing a suitable and convenient place for traveling and home concerts, theatricals, fairs, festivals and public exhibitions generally. With this state of affairs existing we could expect few troupes of real merit to visit us, or if they did, we must enjoy their performances at an admission price double that paid elsewhere.

"We can remember in our boyhood days when the Old Town Hall was sufficiently large to accommodate all who desired to witness the performances of the Sable Harmoneons, Winchell's drolleries, the acrobatic feats of the Antonie Family, the Bateman Children (since achieved a world-wide reputation). "It soon, however, became too small, or rather the town too large, and Corinthian Hall was erected. Here we had balls and parties without number. Sam Dodson's Theatre flourished, and a better class of amusements came to our village. After some years this Hall fell into disuse. The dining room of the National Hotel was used, and last fall the old Episcopal church was transformed into a Concert Hall by Mr. Keneuke. This cosy little place, although well arranged for a moderate sized audience is still too small for general purposes and the wants of our people. But the inconvenience which has existed will now cease."

The new building was begun on the 13th of June, and in spite of dire predictions, was completed before the end of the amusement season by the indomitable energy and perseverance of Col. Thomas Dowling.

DOROTHY J. CLARK

He credited Miller and Odell, the bricklayers and plasterers, and George Haslett, carpenter, for their rapid and thorough work. The walls of the substructure were 20 inches thick, so there would be no fear of danger from sinking floors, and the brick work throughout was very substantial. The wood work was also of the very best available. The stone work was done by William Wagner; the slate roof laid by William Clift; and the painting and glazing done by Manning & Co., all excellent craftsmen.

On the ground floor of the building were two large business rooms, and a north room designed for the office of the Wabash & Erie Canal trustees.

The audience room was on the second floor 104 x 60 ft., with 21 ft. high ceiling. At that time it was believed to be largest public hall in the State. The Masonic Hall at Indianapolis was one foot wider but twenty feet less in length.

The walls were imitation light blue limestone, laid off in blocks. At regular intervals were numerous gas jets, which, when lighted, flooded the hall with light. These gas fixtures were the work of D. W. Watson.

The stage, in the west end of the audience room, was 24 ft. in depth, and supplied with

Continued On Page 5, Col. 1.

scenery, trap-doors and all the conveniences of a first class theatre A flight of steps led from the audience room to the stage and stairs led from the audience room to the stage, and more stairs led to the dressing rooms below. The scenery, proscenium, etc., were designed and painted by T. B. Glessing, of Indianapolis. The stage appointments were done by Otis George, stage carpenter of the Metropolitan Theatre, Indianapolis. The drop curtain was decorated with the beautiful landscape painting of the Rhine river in Germany.

The audience room could comfortably seat 1,200 people, and by placing chairs in the aisles another 200 could be accommodated. It was furnished with comfortable settees which could be removed in a few minutes and the floor cleared for dancing and other purposes.

Two immense furnaces in the basement were sufficient "to keep the atmosphere at a pleasant temperature."

On the first floor there was a ticket office from which a broad flight of stairs led to the audience room above. In the rear of the building, on the first floor, were two large dressing rooms, one for gentlemen, and the other for ladies. From these rooms persons could pass either directly to the audience room or the stage. A passageway extended along the north side of the building to a side door, by which the dressing rooms could be reached, and on the occasion of balls and parties, persons could go directly to the dressing rooms without passing through the front entrance. The front doors could be closed entirely and intruders and hangers-on excluded. The building extended back to the alley, and in damp weather carriages could be driven to the rear entrance directly to the dressing room without touching the ground.

Trying to provide every convenience, a cooking stove was placed in the basement to be used for festivals and suppers.

Many names were suggested for the Hall, but nothing suited so well as plain "Dowling Hall." So long as the building stood, it was a monument and remembrance of the public spirit of the builder.

With characteristic generosity, Col. Dowling offered free use of the hall for church festivals and fairs. Political speeches were given there too. On one occasion 23 wagon loads of people from Otter Creek arrived for one such speech-making.

The Soldiers' Aid Society held a benefit to help the widows and orphans of the Civil War, and on Dec. 20 the Musical Association presented a grand concert — "The Grand Cantata of Esther the Beautiful Queen" — for the handsome admission price of 20 cents.

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Clark Dorothy + Horse Racing (Art)

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Four-Cornered Track became

Today's column continues the story of Terre Haute's county fairs, racetracks, fairgrounds and heyday of Grand Circuit racing in the post-Civil War period until the turn of the century. The city became recognized as a center for fine-bred horses, and its racetrack was known throughout the country for its speed and excitement.

Although the half-mile track at the new fairgrounds north of the National Road east of Brown Avenue was very successful for the state fair there in 1867, it was evident to the Trotting Association that a mile track was necessary for good race meets, so work was begun on the new track in the fall of 1867.

This track, which encircled the half-mile track, proved a failure because the last turn to enter the stretch had to be banked so high that it threw the horses off their stride and slowed the finish. It had to be abandoned.

George R. Grimes surveyed the fairgrounds and more land was acquired on the east. But this proved no better for a regulation track because the total width from north to south was less than 100 rods, and with stables on the north there was barely a quarter of a mile, while open land east of the tree-covered area occupied by buildings was little more than a quarter of a mile wide.

Grimes came up with a plan giving four straight stretches with rather abrupt curves that did not, however, require the banked corners that the first track was obliged to have. A new surface of special clay was imported for the rebuilt track, and Terre Haute had a wonderfully fast track that soon established itself in the Grand Circuit.

From its opening for the 1887 meet, the Four-Cornered Track was progressively the holder of many records for speed until the fall of 1892 when it surpassed all records in the Grand Circuit with the famous trial for a record of Nancy Hanks.

All season this speedy trotter had been breaking her record, and at Terre Hatue on Sept. 28, she attained a record of 2:04, the fastest trot ever run. Paced by the running horse Abe Lincoln, she moved like a machine around the track responding to her famous driver, Budd Doble.

The Trotting Association prospered, and it built the grandstand after the considerable expense of the new track. Below the grandstand they built two of the important income producers, the bar and the Hieronymus wheel.

The fame of the track spread, and some of the most noted horses raced here. Some of the best known drivers and owners established their stables at the grounds or in the nearby countryside.

Axtell, the richest investment in horseflesh, was purchased by a syndicate composed of William P. Ijams, Col. H.E. Billings of Cleveland, and others for $105,000. Axtell was placed at stud here at the Warren Park farm, the Ijams farm south of the city, where Honey Creek Square is now located.

Another innovation helped in these events. The bicycle sulky had just come into use, and this made harness racing faster than ever.

The Terre Haute Grand Circuit meets drew crowds of 75,000 and 100,000 harness racing fans from all over the country and the world

Historically speaking

Clark is Vigo County's official historian and formerly worked for The Terre Haute Tribune.

By Dorothy Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

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during week-long events.

The starter of these race meets was Charles R. Duffin who needed no loud speaker system. His sonorous voice could be heard all over the grounds. Old-timers recall his bellowing, "Hold that pole horse," before the start of a race. It ws said that his booming voice commands scared the horses in downtown Terre Haute or nearly that far.

No story of the old track would be complete without credit to U.R. Jeffers, the man who did more to make and keep it in condition. He had been a leader in the racing movement here, and when he was put in charge of the new track he gave it all he had.

It was told of him that before each heat he personally rode around the track or at least the home stretch in a specially built, low-wheeled buckboard from which he carefully swept off any fallen leaves with a feather duster so that nothing should interfere with the event's success.

Interest in harness racing lagged over the years, and the track was finally abandoned when Memorial Stadium was built. Three-I Baseball League enjoyed a brief time of interest there, but it too faded from the entertainment scene. Now the ISU football field is surrounded by one of the city's golf courses at that historic location.

After the passing of the old mile track, a number of horsemen kept up the sport on a private track built on the Paul Kuhn farm east of the city where test races against time with a few contests were run at intervals for several years.

The grand old days of fast horses ceased to interest Terre Haute fans. It is hoped it will be revived again with the harness racing brought back to the Vigo County Fair as it has in county fairs in the Wabash Valley.

Opera House (Naylor) — Stories + Clark, Dorothy

Famous 'trod the boards' at Grand

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Community Affairs File

Historically speaking

Clark is Vigo County's official historian and formerly worked for The Terre Haute Tribune.

By Dorothy Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

To say the people of Terre Haute and the surrounding area were entertainment hungry in 1897 is putting it mildly. The city had been without a theater since fire destroyed the Naylor Opera House July 21, 1896.

Contractor August Fromme began construction of the Grand Opera House, southeast corner of Seventh and Cherry streets, May 1, 1897. In just six months, the new theater was completed. The grand opening was Nov. 2. Designed by local architect W. H. Floyd, the theater cost about $100,000.

Seats for the first performance were auctioned at the Terre Haute House the previous week. The seats didn't bring any fancy prices, but the interest shown guaranteed a large crowd would turn out for opening night. The remainder of the seats were sold at the box office for 50 cents, 75 cents, $1 and $1.50.

Because of the uncertainty of the opening date, it was impossible for the manager, Theodore W. Barhydt Jr., to book an attraction that had not been presented here before. All the new shows were booked solid, and an unplanned, one-night stand, such as this, couldn't be arranged far enough in advance.

The comic opera "Isle of Champagne," starring Richard Golden and Katherine Germaine with a supporting cast of more than 60, was the opening attraction. The production boasted "handsomescenery and costumes, a full ballet, and a fine orchestra."

The former doorkeeper at the old Naylor Opera House, Will Parrott, was chosen to be in charge of the lower floor. Head usher on the lower floor was George A. Schaal Jr. Charles Stewart was head usher of the balcony, the area known as "family circle" at the Naylor.

Wearing uniforms of dark green trimmed with black braid were the ushers: Edison Wagner, Roy Sibley, Ray Lawrence, Fred Butz, George Helmer, John Staff Jr., Robert Heinl, Blinn Hunter and Charles Ryan.

A lady attendant checked the ladies' hats before they entered the theater, a sensible custom that was becoming popular at that time. In fact, the programs carried a warning about hat removal. Patrons could rent opera glasses for 25 cents.

Following the highly successful opening of the Grand Opera House, Manager Barhydt slipped off to Quincy, Ill., where he married Henrietta Viola Schultheis, daughter of George and Minnie Schultheis, prominent residents of that city. The newlyweds returned to live at the Terre Haute House after a brief honeymoon in Chicago.

James Paxton Voorhees, son of the Tall Sycamore of the Wabash, Sen. Daniel Voorhees, was also staying at the Terre Haute House and attended opening night. He had recently resigned his position at the Congressional Library to devote more time to his stage appearances. Voorhees had presented monologues entitled "Out of the Past" quite successfully on the New York and Washington stages. Under the sponsorship of the local Jackson Club, he appeared on the stage of the new Grand Opera House.

Later during opening week a well-attended amateur minstrel show was presented by the young ladies of Terre Haute. Rose Herz and Laura Cox acted as end men complete with bones and tambourines, along with Janie Hunter, Eva Hollinger, Mable Cook, Alice Hammerstein, Franceska Strong, Neida Dickson, Grace Jenckes, Julia Ford and Elsie Crawford.

Cora O'Boyle performered a whistling solo, and vocal solos were given by Louise Smith and Mrs. George F. Westfall. They also made up a quartet with Edith Longman and Jessie Perdue. A second quartet included Carrie Hyde, Mary Bridewell and Lucy and Margaret Farral.

Music was provided by the full Ringgold Orchestra. Professor Duenweg directed several dances. The chorus was composed of 60 voices.

So many famous people "trod the boards" at the Grand. James Whitcomb Riley spoke before a packed house in 1903. He was introduced by Max Ehrmann, who was to appear on the same stage some years later as a noted lecturer and philosopher, reading from his own poems and other writings.

Another native son, Eugene V. Debs, spoke before capacity crowds at the Grand Opera House several times. Actors and actresses, musicians and performers of the old vaudeville days, all the famous and those who were later to become famous, appeared in traveling shows at the Grand.

Many of Terre Haute's older citizens could remember the never-to-be-forgotten stage performance of "Ben Hur." The chariot race scene in this play required a very large stage, and the new Grand was one of the largest in Indiana.

The first "talking picture" ever shown in Terre Haute was on the silver screen at the Grand. This Al Jolson classic was the forerunner of the big change in the entertainment field.

After 62 years of providing the people of Terre Haute and the surrounding area much pleasure and many happy memories, the doors were closed in 1959. The building was razed for a parking lot later that year.

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And a grand house it was...

Photo/ Dorothy J. Clark collection

The Grand Opera House was built in 1897 at the southeast corner of Seventh and Cherry streets. The theater offered entertainment-hungry Terre Hauteans stage shows, famous actors and actresses, vaudeville, silent movies and the town's first talking movie. This is how the building looked in 1910, 49 years before it was demolished.

1989

Grand performance

theatergoers in 1901

Harry Glazier's 'Prince Otto' thrilled

TS JUN 25 1989

Actors and Actresses (hr)

Historically speaking

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By Dorothy J. Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

The Grand Opera House was at its peak over 85 years ago. Terre Haute was always considered a good theater town, and all the road shows enjoyed playing here as much as local residents enjoyed their performances.

During one week in September 1901, theater-goers saw "Old Dan Tucker" put on by Dan Sherman's company; a Railroad Jack Company production; the mellerdrammer, "A Gambler's Daughter," and finally Otis Skinner's "Prince Otto."

A lively affair of noise, burlesque, music, jokes, etc., "Old Dan Tucker" was built around a droll "jay" character. Music for the play as well as between acts was furnished by the company's own band.

The Railroad Jack Company was new to Terre Haute and featured a black-maned South African lion. During one of the scenes in the play, a great tornado blew a circus tent to pieces while a woman was thrown into the lion's den to be rescued from under his claws by the tramp. The company carried all its exotic scenery and mechanical effects for this ambitious show.

But the play Terre Hauteans were waiting for was the New York production of "Prince Otto" because a local boy was playing the leading role. Harry Glazier, the show's star, was born and reared in Terre Haute, the son of Joseph Kern, a Civil War lieutenant who had died in his home several years before the turn of the century.

Harry Glazier's real name was Charles Kern. Following his parents' deaths, he lived with his Grandmother Madison for several years in her home at Sixth and Poplar streets, later purchased by Dr. Swafford.

Young Kern worked in his Uncle Philip Newhart's Hominy Mill after he left school. This industry stood at First and Wabash where later the Terre Haute Carriage Factory was located.

When he was 14 years old, he left Terre Haute to go live in Chicago with his Uncle Charles Kern. Prominent in Chicago politics, Kern served as Sheriff of Cook County, when that office was said to be the best paying political office in the United States with a salary of $80,000 a year.

Later Kern was elected Treasurer of Cook County, the first Republican to hold that office following the Civil War. His death occurred in the late 1890s, and his body was returned to Terre Haute for burial.

Young Kern's mother was the daughter of T. A. Madison, prominent contractor and builder who constructed the first wagon bridge here over the Wabash River. His sister, Madeline Kern, married James Parker of Chicago.

The young man lived with his uncle for two years before going to Boston where he became interested in amateur theatricals. He showed such ability and promise that he was given a minor part in the Boston Theater Stock Company at age 17. This road show played in New York, Chicago and San Francisco during a limited road tour.

Local newspapers here reported that "Mr. Harry Glazier played Prince Otto up to tradition. With a good figure and manner and an excellent voice, he was able to delineate with grace and force the careless gayety of the prince . . . scion of an old Terre Haute family . . . sustained our confidence in him and his histrionic career."

The Terre Haute Express stated that he was born at Fourth and Walnut streets, and lived here until he was 14 years old. Using those figures, and the fact that he was supposed to be 29 years old, he was born in 1872.

Another uncle was Jack Kern,

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jeweler at 607 Main St. Other relatives included Miss Addie Kern; Frank P. Kern, employed at the Newhart Hominy Mill; George S. Kern, watchmaker for Jacob Kern, and all living at 800 S. Fourth St.

Joseph A., Otto P., and Philip Newhart lived together at 320 S. Fourth St. Miss Anna, Charles H., and Jacob F. Newhart lived at 322 S. Second St. All of the men in this family worked at the mill. Before that some of the Newhart family were plow-makers, while the Kerns made steam-pressed brick.

Prior to 1901, Harry Glazier played D'Artagnan in "The Three Musketeers," while this season he starred in "Prince Otto," a role played in 1900 by Otis Skinner.

All the elaborate stage settings and costumes used by the famous Skinner were brought to Terre Haute for this performance. Glazier received flattering press notices in the cities where he had filled engagements that year and was rapidly becoming recognized as one of the leading American actors. The company had played St. Louis and Paducah, Ky., before traveling to Terre Haute in its special train carrying a cast of 35 and two carloads of scenery.

The Grand Opera House was filled to capacity. His friends turned out in record numbers, and all those who had enjoyed his performances two years before were in their seats costing 25 cents to $1 at matinee and evening shows.

The play was adapted from a novel by Robert Louis Stevenson. In the third act much mention was made of how skillfully actress Elizabeth Lea managed to back up a flight of stairs wearing a gown with a long train. Playing the role of Princess Seraphina, she managed to escape her male pursuer without entangling herself in her costume or tumbling down the stairs.

No other mention was found of Harry Glazier in local news. He and his wife and 4-year-old daughter lived in New York in 1901. What ever happened to this native Terre Hautean?

Clark, Dorothy

Grand performance theatergoers in 1901

Harry Glazier's 'Prince Otto' thrilled

JUN 25 1989

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*Clark, Dorothy

New building had 1,758 lights

Grand Theater was truly grand and cost 120 'grand'

T.s JUN 02 1991

Historically speaking

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By Dorothy J. Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

The building season of 1897 witnessed completion of one building which Terre Haute and Wabash Valley citizens had looked forward to — a ground floor theater. After the complete destruction by fire of the Naylor Opera House, northeast corner of Fourth and Wabash, on July 21, 1896, the city had no theater for traveling stage shows and entertainments.

The building committee of the Terre Haute House Company was composed of W.P. Ijams, John Beggs and Charles Bauer. They planned a five-story office building immediately behind the hotel, with the lower three floors to be used for an opera house.

First dirt was thrown for excavation June 8, 1897, and the building was completed and turned over to the building committee on Nov. 1. Cost of the building was set at $120,000.

Massive and stately in appearance, the Grand Theater harmonized with the Terre Haute House (the one before the present building) in dark red brick, but the style of architecture was entirely different. The Grand was Renaissance, with elaborate trimmings, including windows, arches, roof-line and other permanent decorations of fine red stone, beautifully carved.

The main office building was five stories high, extending 135 feet on North Seventh Street, and 68 feet on Cherry Street, where it joined the opera house. A double firewall separated the two structures into two entirely different buildings.

The opera house was 72 feet by 188 feet, and extended to a height of over 58 feet from ground to cornice line. The office building contained six storerooms and 54 highly-desirable offices, with elevator and janitor service.

The entrance into a hallway 20 feet wide with tiled floor and elegant oak finish led to the theater in one direction, and to the elevator and stairway of the office building in the other.

The directors of the Terre Haute House Company finally let the contract to August Fromme of Terre Haute for the theater and office building to be completed and ready for occupancy by Nov. 1. Plans were made by Floyd & Stone of Terre Haute for the new building to be lighted by electricity, heated by steam, with all modern improvements known in theatrical construction.

The contractor used a double shift of men to attain deadline. On June 10, 1898, the Gazette published a complete list of performances for the coming season, including Socialist Debs, Agnostic Ingersoll, ministers, Elks minstrels, YWCA and YMCA lecture series, war lectures, Sousa Band concert, Shakespeare, Uncle Tom's Cabin, etc.

The season at Harrision Park Casino, located north of Collett Park, was in full blast. The Mackay Comic Opera Company opened for a week on June 20.

The firm of Dickson & Talbot, controllers of the burned out Naylor Opera House, were unsuccessful in their bid for the new theater. The new theater was leased to Theodore W. Barhydt Jr. of Iowa who was relocating in Terre Haute.

It was necessary to cut down an ancient sycamore tree that had stood behind the hotel for many years. Even the skeptics had their doubts removed about the new Grand Opera House when they witnessed Fromme beginning excavation and the foundation bricklaying.

Prox & Brinkman were responsible for the power, light and heat plant with the most modern boiler rooms. Four boilers of 110 horse power each also furnished hot water to the theater, office building and hotel. The dynamos of the direct connection kind were the same as those used by the Electric Street Railway at its power house.

The steam plant was located at the east end of Cherry Street, along the Vandalia tracks, several blocks from the hotel. This assured less smoke near the theater, and security against fire. There was no fire in the whole property, hotel, theater and office building, except the one in the hotel's kitchen.

The dry steam was brought up from the power plant in pipes wrapped with asbestos and placed in a tight conduit beneath the street. Few, if any, theaters in the United States had such an arrangement.

Local firms were used when possible. J.A. Parker furnished iron work; W.W. Adamson, glass; Terre Haute Stone Works and A.G. Austin & Co., hardware. Frescoe work on the brownstone was done by Charles Lieber of Louisville. Begun on May 1, the work was completed Nov. 1, 1897.

Fromme's foremen were Louis Brille, carpenters; Oscar Minter, brick works; Will Rink, painters; Chauncey Watson, plasterers; and John Kolsem, office clerk.

There were 1,758 incandescent lights in the theater. The ceiling frescoes shaded down from light to dark terra cotta. There were 10 dressing rooms on the first and second floors, and two large rooms in the basement for the chorus.

The building committee chose the subject for the drop curtain from a large number of watercolors. Entitled "Sea Gull Rocks," a famous scene off the coast of Maine, it was painted by artist Joseph Physioc of Garrick's Theater, New York.

The Terre Haute House Company was organized in 1888, over 60 years from the time of the first Prairie House, later to become the Terre Haute House. The Panic of 1893 had delayed the newer building.

Theater manager Barhydt came from Burlington, Iowa. He married Miss Henrietta Viola Schultheis of Iowa, and the couple lived at the Terre Haute House beginning Oct. 23, 1897.

Curtain time? 8:15 to 8:45 p.m.

Women told to take off huge hats in the theater

Ts JUN 09 1991 Clark, Dorothy

Historically speaking

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This is the second episode in the series of theater history of Terre Haute . . .

The Grand Theater opening was set for Nov. 2, 1897. Due to the uncertainty of the opening date, it was not possible to book a show very far in advance, so the opening performance was not new. It was a comic opera — "Isle of Champagne" — starring Richard Golden and Katherine Germaine. Handsome scenery and costumes, a full ballet and a fine orchestra were promised.

Entering the outside theater doors, the excited crowd could look through the glass in the massive oak doors at the east end of the lobby and see the beautiful outer foyer of the theater. Beyond that, through handsome portiers, they could see the spacious inner foyer and the brilliantly-lighted theater itself.

Col. William E. McLean gave the dedicatory address on opening night, saying, " . . . a gala night with the beauty, brains, brawn and business of the city all represented."

One of the incidents of the performance came in the last act when actor Richard Golden appeared with a real bottle of champagne, and in a speech "filled with drollery and wit, christened the house in a manner in which ships of war are launched, with actress Germaine drinking to the health of architects, builders, owners, managers and all present!"

(over)

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Players who had performed here were unanimous in praising the theater for its "behind the scenes" comforts. They called it a model theater.

The "old" scenery at the Grand had been retouched and brightened by the master scenic artist, Howard Tuttle of Milwaukee. New scenery was added to the stock, and the Grand had one of the largest and best displays in the country.

Early in 1905, articles of incorporation were filed in West Virginia for the Barhydt Theater Company. Officers included Barhydt, president and manager; his uncle, T.W. Barhydt of Burlington, Iowa, vice president; Mrs. Barhydt Jr., secretary; and Shannon P. Katzenbach, treasurer.

In addition of the officers, Attorney S.R. Hamill of Terre Haute and Miss directors. It was stated that the formation of this company would in no way change the management of the Grand. The incorporation papers were filed in West Virginia because it was found there was no law in Indiana for incorporating theatrical companies.

In the middle of May 1905, the Grand Opera House closed for the season to get ready for a small army of workmen employed to erect scaffolding so that the painters and decorators could begin their work of completely altering the appearance of the theater. Remember, this was before the days of air-conditioning, and Indiana sweltered from the middle of May to the opening in September.

Barhydt had decided to use red, ivory and gold colors this time. A new stage was being built, new carpets laid, all changes to improve the appearance of the interior.

After July 1, all bookings were referred to Klaw & Erlanger which provided none but the best, high-class attractions, and Stair & Hamlin, both of New York City, which provided popular priced attractions.

The Varieties Theater on the south side of Wabash (where the Liberty Theater was later) lasted just eight years, 1907-1915. To some it was sad to see it close. It offered its first vaudeville bill on June 2, 1907.

Work on the new Lyric Theater was started June 1, 1905. It took a while to get the tenants of the frame building moved to other quarters. This delayed the plans. A fancy electrical front was planned to make the new theater very prominent along Wabash Avenue at night.

When a new theater is scheduled to open, it's usually found that business falls off the last week at the old stand. This was not the case, however. In fact, quite the reverse. The Varieties held large crowds at each show. The Lyric was to be built opposite the Varieties.

When Barhydt gave up the Grand on June 1, 1913, he had played 3,969 performances. The biggest money office attraction was the first visit of "Ben Hur" which netted $17,000 for the week.

Other record houses, for one performance, were David Warfield in "The Music Master" which brought in $2,361.50; Maude Adams in "Peter Pan," $2,454; Julia Marlowe in "When Knighthood Was in Flower," $2,242.50; while Sarah Bernhardt led them all with a box office receipt of $2,507.

About 1910, T.W. Barhydt had a dream of building a vaudeville theater, and bought the lot at Eighth and Ohio streets, southwest corner, and began talking with leading theater architects.

Fire-proof theaters were still unknown in 1910, but by 1915, he bought out the interests of his partner, Jack Heffler, and became associated with Joseph M. Finn and Marcus Heiman.

Next Sunday's column will begin the story of the Hippodrome Theater.

Einecke's mandolin orchestra played between acts. The local newspapers reported society notes plus who wore what at the gala event.

As the second theater season at the new Grand Opera House rolled around, Manager Barhydt told of two things troubling him: "One is the theater hat, and the other is the lateness with which the curtain has been rung up."

The curtain was pulled any time between 8:15 and 8:45, but this year there was a new rule. From 1899, the curtain would go up at 8:15 sharp, no matter whether there were 50 or 500 people in the theater. "Some shows are too long," he said, "and people don't like to stay out until midnight."

Barhydt stated that the failure of women to take off their huge hats was already being noticed here. In New York, women were very prompt to take off these hats, unless they wore a theater bonnet.

The staff of employees for 1899 included Shannon Katzenbach, treasurer; John Heath, advertising agent; L.L. Helmer Jr., gallery door keeper; Fred A. Jackson, gallery ticket seller; J.L. Maynard, stage manager; Fred Geiger, properties; Richard Roberts, policeman; Belle Lee, janitress; and John Moore, assistant janitor.

Ushers on the main floor were George School, head usher, Edison Wagoner, Leroy Sibley, Robert Heinl, Harry Miller, Fred Butz, and Roy Lawrence. Balcony ushers included Charles Stewart, head usher, John Staff, Charles Ryan, Harry Bondmann and Clifford Hammerstein.

A 1900 issue of "Dramatic Magazine" devoted six pages to Terre Haute's Grand Opera House, illustrated with pictures of its interior and exterior, and its manager. He was commended for his excellent work in keeping "the gloss and finish and freshness" after passing its second birthday.

Ben Hur painting was largest ever

Hippodrome had 18 exits to get people out in a hurry

Clark, Dorothy
Ts JUN 16 1991

Today's column is the third in a series dealing with local theater history, from the building of the Grand Opera House to the Indiana, the only theater still serving the public.

The first work toward erection of the Hippodrome was done when men began to tear down the old brick house standing on the lot at the southwest corner of Eighth and Ohio streets. This news was dated June 2, 1914.

The Hippodrome was to be absolutely fireproof with an ornamental front, and was to have the most modern equipment. Five Terre Haute contractors were successful in bidding on contracts, including Terre Haute Roofing Co., A.W. Didley & Co., all sheet metal work and galvanized Spanish tile roofing; Prox & Burget, all plumbing and heating; C.F. Hoff, common brick; and Terre Haute Furniture Co., all furniture and carpets. The general contractor was H. Ellenberger & Co. of Chicago.

John Eberson was the architect (more about him later). The Hippodrome was a mixture of Italian Renaissance and Eberson's unique styles. The interior contained surprises in furnishings and style of decoration. From the dressing rooms beneath the stage to the operator's booth behind the last row of gallery seats, it was an education to the average person.

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Under the stage were 14 large dressing rooms. The stage was large and roomy, 40 feet deep, 80 feet wide, 60 feet from floor to the rigging loft, obscured from view of the audience. The seats of this unusual theater were 24 inches wide instead of the usual 19 inches. There were hot and cold water bathing facilities for performing artists, and marble-topped makeup tables in the dressing rooms.

One of the celebrities in attendance opening night was Asher Levy who admired the Hippodrome for "its substantiality. There's none of that papier-mache stuff, that gingerbread quality that you see in so many New York theaters. The 'Hipp' was built to stay. That's what impresses one at the outset. Eberson was peeking into the future when he designed the building."

According to the Chicago news of February 1917, the Hippodrome represented an expenditure of $150,000, and with its 1,700 seating capacity "relegated the famous old Varieties theater to the moving picture classification as a theatrical structure. The Varieties played its last small time vaudeville show last week."

Opening night for the Hippodrome was Feb. 16, 1915. It was dedicated with national anthem; the official state song, "On The Banks of the Wabash, Far Away," composed by Paul Dresser; and a speech by Gov. Samuel L. Ralston.

A packed house listened to this speech which mentioned other occasions when he had enjoyed Anna Pavlowa and Michael Mordkin, before indirectly referring to the more recent raid and arrests made by U.S. Marshals of more than 125 Terre Haute men on federal indictments charging them with conspiracy to defraud the government at the fall election of 1914.

Ralston said: "Speaking seriously, however, I want to congratulate the citizens of Terre Haute because they have turned their faces toward better things. Nature has dealt lavishly with Terre Haute,

and there is no reason why Terre Haute should not bear aloft in every movement the white flag of good citizenship."

The Hippodrome orchestra opened with "The Hippodrome March" composed and arranged by Will H. Bryant, director, and Leo Baxter, pianist. John T. Beasley presided and introduced all the dignitaries. A special railroad car was used by prominent theater people from Chicago to travel to Terre Haute.

Through the proscenium opening the stage was 40 feet wide and 30 feet high. On the east side of the stage was the pin rail; the west side had one corner room of brick for animal performances. The floor was tapped in various places for electricity.

More than 1,500 electric lights illuminated the stage, some plain, others colored for scenic effects. One man could control house-lights by various circuits from a large switchboard on stage. He darkened the theater by opening a good many switches, and elaborate sets of dimmers were on stage.

The orchestra pit was roomy and equipped with special sounding boards. The floors of the auditorium were of concrete, also the balcony and pit, but boards covered the pit floor to help acoustics.

The Hippodrome had 18 exits to get people out in a hurry. The boxes were built roomy and comfortable, each provided with a room where persons occupying the box might go to smoke or to miss an act they did not care to see.

The $65,000 cost of the building was due to the fact that little excavating was done at the site. The basement under the Hippodrome extended only under a small portion of the front, the space used for the heating plant.

The drop curtain was a magnificent painting of the chariot race from "Ben Hur," supposed to be the largest painting ever made of this scene, in keeping with the name of the theater.

On opening night, the recently-installed boulevard lights on Eighth Street were lighted for the first time.

There were 750 seats, all of Circassian walnut, upholstered with brown Spanish leather. The inclined floor permited theater-goers a clear view of the stage. The balcony seats were known as full-roll veneer, with no sharp edge to cut off circulation.

The boxes were equipped with bentwood Vienna cane chairs, six chairs in each of four boxes. Turquoise-blue valances of genuine plush decorated the stage and boxes, not painted imitations.

The foyer had a two-story effect, used exclusively in the United States by John Eberson, architect. The European plan of a grand staircase in the foyer was used.

Woodwork had a walnut finish, floors were tile, no carpet on the staircases. Marble panels and tile floors were used in the lobby. Tickets were purchased from the most elaborate cashier's cage in the State of Indiana. The color scheme was of old rose and orange, rose-gold, old ivory and heliotrope.

The policy of the Hippodrome was two shows a day during five days of the week; on Saturday and Sunday, three shows each, matinee plus two night performances.

In July 1915 it was reported that "the second largest electric sign in Terre Haute now looms at night from atop the building at the northeast corner of Eighth and Wabash Ave."

The sign told that the Hippodrome was one block south, and there was an atrractive feminine figure, double lifesize, to point the way. The girl in the sign was 12 feet high. Built in Chicago, local assembly was done by Freitag & Weinhardt at a cost of $3,500.

Episode four will continue the local theater story next Sunday

Indiana Theater built in 1921

Main floor seats best for viewing moving pictures

TS JUN 23 1991

Clark, Dorothy

Historically speaking

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Special to The Tribune-Star

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Today's column continues the saga of local theater history from the Gay Nineties to modern times.

The Hippodrome was thoroughly appraised by half-owners in Chicago. Barhydt had half the stock; F. & H. the other half; preferred stock was owned by Barhydt, B.V. Marshall, Harry J. Baker and other locals.

Barhydt was general manager; Otto Meyer, house manager; Shannon Katzenbach, treasurer; Henry Hayden, doorman; Walter Nesbitt, operator; Will Bryant, orchestra leader; and Carl Brentlinger, stage manager.

About this time, a new $6,000 Locomobile Touring Car arrived in Terre Haute, the property of Barhydt. It was equipped with safety bumpers, a complete set of toilet articles, searchlight, and other handy comforts, including an electrical cigar lighter.

Architect John Eberson, it was learned, graduated from the University of Vienna, Austria. His father did not believe in imperialism and militarism, and after John's six weeks in the Austrian army, he helped his son obtain his release and got him a pass to the United States. He landed in New York, ignorant of the language, etc. His diploma meant nothing.

Eberson began work with George H. Johnson, a well-known architect of the time, and decided on his specialty, theater. During his career he had designed 75 theaters before taking on the job of the Hippodrome. His home and office were in Chicago.

Mrs. Eberson was an English woman who reared her children as Americans. She was here for the opening of the Hippodrome. Advance sale tickets sold within an hour.

By 1920, gossip was flying about the transfer of ownership of the Hippodrome, but Barhydt did not confirm, or deny. It was rumored that Orpheum interests would take over the Hippodrome, and Ross Garver would continue as manager.

Harry Hayden, treasurer, quit the Hippodrome and opened a photography shop downtown. He had been with Barhydt when he was at the Grand in 1900, and went with him to the Lyric, to the Varieties (which had been replaced by the Liberty), and from the Varieties to the Hippodrome, a 20-year theatrical career.

Barhydt sold his holdings in the Hippodrome in October 1920 to interests aligned with the W.V.M.A., and announced he planned to build the largest motion picture theater in Indiana outside Indianapolis in the heart of the business district, probably on Ohio Street, about a block west of the Hippodrome.

It was rumored that Barhydt's withdrawal from vaudeville and entry into the photoplay field was to cause a realignment of interests controlling the film houses in Terre Haute.

The property in question at the southwest corner of Seventh and Ohio was the location of the Fox & Pfister real estate and insurance office. One-story buildings west to the Bell Telephone building and south to the alley, a space of 180 feet by 140 feet, were in the hands of Harry Baker, attorney, who together with the L.J. Cox heirs, owned the greater interest in the property.

If the deal went through, one of

the largest picture and vaudeville houses in the state would be erected on the site at an early date. Baker said the property would sell for about $150,000.

By Nov. 1, the half-million dollars required for the new theater had been oversubscribed. Some of the heirs of the property lived in distant parts of the country, and the estate was represented by stock subscribers. Ground breaking in the spring was the word.

Barhydt began making plans for a large theater estimated to cost about $600,000, a one-floor theater, with main office at the corner, and small offices facing Ohio and Seventh. The business rooms would be two-story. Rumors were that there would be a working agreement between the Orpheum, American and the new theater.

These pretentious plans included seating capacity of about 2,500, with rented retail shops. The new Indiana Theater would be a Famous Players' house. Barhydt went to Detroit to familiarize himself with such theaters before making his choices of plans and architect.

The construction of the new type of theater was more expensive than that of the old houses using the balcony arrangement, but it was much more successful, the main floor being the only one from which a moving picture may be seen at the proper angle.

Angles of vision also were considered in the inclining of the floor and the arrangement of the seats in the form of an elongated horseshoe, doing away with those corner seats in the front of the house, from which spectators always went home with a headache and not a very clear idea of the picture.

The lights would be thrown from prisms and from all sides of the house, creating various color effects.

Barhydt, Charles Fox, Harry J. Baker and Shannon Katzenbach were named as local directors of an operating company controlling the proposed new Indiana, the American and Orpheum million dollar deal.

Leases of the tenants expired March 1, 1921, and a week later the site was cleared and the old building razed. John A. Schumacher, general contractor, was in charge. Nearly 300 men were on hand as early as 7 a.m. seeking employment. About 30 men were employed, and ground clearing was expected to take about a week and cost less than $400,000.

The Indiana Theater was built like the Yale Bowl. Theater policy was outlined by Paramount, most powerful in the field, embracing Famous Players, the Lasky Corp., Artcraft, etc.

The local Chamber of Commerce observed "Indiana Day" at their weekly Friday luncheon at the Deming Hotel in January 1922. The principal speaker was John Eberson, architect. He answered questions why the Spanish style was chosen for the theater.

"It happened," he said, "he was caught with a Spanish design up his sleeve. He was inspired by a picture in a book of life in Spain in the province of Andalusia, southern part of Spain, complete with designs, colors, lighting effects, the air and mystery of olden days."

Eberson explained the gingerbread effect, the rotunda's colors and the promenade with its soft lighting and atmosphere, then, up the grand staircase into the main auditorium. He was trying to duplicate the quietness and beauty of Andalusian night.

The light fixtures were antiqued by experts. The local workmen here spent two days trying to clean them before Eberson arrived and stopped them.

Another episode in Terre Haute's theater history will appear next Sunday.

Opening feature at Indiana was 'Cappy Ricks' in 12 wagons

Pipe organ cost $28,000 in 1922; sections hauled to theater

T.S JUN 3 0 1991

Clark, Dorothy

Historically speaking

Clark retired as The Tribune-Star's women's editor in 1980. She has written a local history column since 1956. She is Vigo County Historian.

By Dorothy J. Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

This is the fifth episode of local theater history.

It's impossible to relate theater history in Terre Haute without telling of the important role of Theodore W. Barhydt Jr. He came to town in March 1897, holding the lease on the Grand Opera House for over 15 years, clearing a profit of $225,000, an average of $15,000 per year.

He opened the Lyric on the site of the later Orpheum on Oct. 30, 1905, and on June 3, 1907, took over the old Varieties which stood where the Liberty Theater was later built (The Tribune-Star press room now). Both the Lyric and Varieties were operated with profit as vaudeville theaters.

Barhydt promoted the building of the Hippodrome, having purchased the old Bell property years before with the idea of eventually building a theater of some sort.

After selling his interests in the Hippodrome, Barhydt planned a long vacation, but soon set about to build a new theater, the Indiana.

At the Chamber of Commerce "theater day," Barhydt talked about the Indiana Theater he was promoting as president. He talked about Raymond Mork, in charge of construction; R.A. Morrison of Chicago, representing Pierce Electric, electrical system; and the safe switchboard invention of B.E. Jamors, a student of Philip Woodward at Rose Polytechnic Institute. Up to now, silent movies were shown in remodeled storerooms or reformed concert halls, and the public demanded better.

The Indiana Theater was sold to the corporation operating six houses including the Liberty Theater of Terre Haute — Consolidated Realty & Theatres Corp. of Chicago. The sale was completed June 1, 1923. The new owners operated theaters in Evansville, Kokomo, Richmond, Fort Wayne and Clinton.

John A. Schumacher of Terre Haute and Indianapolis built the Indiana here and the one in Indianapolis, also St. Anthony's Hospital addition, the Root Store, Rea School, etc.

On March 5, 1921, contractors were here to bid on the Indiana, but the bids were found to be too high; five were rejected. Schumacher awarded the contract below $400,000. Site clearing began immediately.

Near the end of 1922, the big organ was hauled to the theater in sections by 12 huge transfer wagons. The seats were expected the next week. Experts were installing the big sign "Indiana" which was unique in the country — 28 feet long, 30 feet wide, curved front, with letters 4 feet high, and 100 switches.

The scenery artist, E.K. Hodges, had painted half way up the 65 feet skywards, a gridiron of the seven drops. Settings included a garden scene, rock pass, one horizon, woods scene, palace arch, palace backing, and a landscape. Already completed were eight palace wings and 10 woods wings.

An auction for the sale of seats for the first performance was conducted in the rotunda of the Terre Haute House. Col. W.E.S. Bunn reported a sellout!

When it came to publicity, no one could do it better than the Barhydts. Engraved invitations were sent out for a dress rehearsal at the Indiana on Jan. 27, 1922, at 8 p.m. There was to be dancing, a tour of inspection, etc. Everyone lucky enough to have attended previous openings could hardly wait to see what this event would offer.

Possibly two of the largest theater parties ever given in Terre Haute were those given after opening night of the Hippodrome. The Barhydts entertained all the dignitaries of the American theater world, the governor and his wife, and special guests from Chicago.

Mr. and Mrs. W.L. Sparks entertained 70 guests with a theater party followed by a five-course supper at the Hotel Deming. The guest list included all prominent Terre Hauteans. The John T. Beasleys were lucky enough to be invited to both parties. Members of the Rotary Club and their wives were special guetss.

On opening day, Jan. 27, 1922, the box office opened at 12:30 p.m. The first show was at 1 p.m. The promenade extended an entire half block, handsomely furnished with massive divans where guests could meet, talk and smoke, before taking seats.

The ladies restroom at the far end of the promenade was done in blue and gold with upholstered furniture, wallpaper, floor lamps, etc., harmonizing with the color scheme. Public telephone booths and drinking fountains were to the left of the promenade.

House telephones were stationed so the ushers, girls dressed in Spanish costumes, could commune with officers in the foyer, informing them of the number of seats available in sections of the house.

There were eight features to every two-hour show. The prices were 25 cents for afternoon, 40 cents for evenings, except Saturday and Sunday and holidays when all performances were 40 cents. No seats were reserved.

Each show began with an overture by

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the Indiana's Symphonic Orchestra, conducted by Raymond Townsley. Then short sketches of comic, cartoon or comedy subjects were followed by entertainers. There were usually new weekly and comedy besides the feature picture.

The opening feature was Thomas Meighan in "Cappy Ricks," a Paramount Picture. Bills changed on Wednesday and Saturday.

Sidney Smith was theater manager; Maurice Fox, assistant manager and publicity man; Bert Steinhauser, projectionist.

Some 9,000 people enjoyed the first program. Seating capacity was 2,000. For three of five shows, the house was completely filled. Telegrams of congratulations poured in. Great bouquets of flowers were placed in the lobby.

The handsome pipe organ installed at the Indiana Theater cost $28,000. It was the talk of the town. B.E. Marriatt, the expert from Chicago, and an assistant, spent two weeks installing this Wurlitzer Hope Jones Unit Orchestra which the general public called a "pipe organ."

Occupying space in the orchestra pit, the basement, and a small chamber on each side of the theater were pipes concealed behind grills covered with a thin, gauzy silk, and with a shutter effect, could be operated by the organist at will.

The organ had three manuals in circular arrangement, composed of solo, swell and accompaniment. There were 106 stops on the console; 26 combination pistons in relation to the keyboard, and 15 pistons connected with the pedals which worked the trap effects of the trap-drummer. In connection with the organ was a piano arranged alongside the first instrument in the pit. The piano could be operated from the organ keyboard.

Only a "high class expert" could possibly operate the organ orchestra. Included in the stops were tuba, trumpet, oboe, clarinet, kinura, vox humana, flute, tibia, clausa, diaphonic diapson, seven rauls of strings, harp, chrysoglott, xylophone, bells, sleigh bells, chimes, snare drum and tambourine. Castanets and chime blocks were played from the manual of keys; bass drum, cymbal and tympani were played from the pedal keys. The relay and blower were located in separate basement rooms of the theater.

Jack Welch came from Detroit to operate the unit orchestra. For some time he had been organist at the Broadway Strand in that city.

Marriott expected the work to be completed so the instrument could be given a thorough tryout before the opening on Jan. 28.

Recognized as one of the best musicians in Terre Haute, Raymond Townsley was chosen director of the orchestra. He had been connected with local theaters for a number of years, most recently with the American. He played with the 152nd Infantry Band overseas.

Filling the seats for the 20-piece orchestra were Rollie Zachary, first violin, leader from the Grand Theater orchestra; Max Naylor, trap drummer at the American; Marie O'Laughlin, pianist at the Orpheum; Boyd Gaugh, first violin; Fred Ford, Sousa's Band, trombone; and Charles Byrde, horn, of Kilties' Band.

Townsley's first selection on opening day was a special arrangement of Paul Dresser's "On the Banks of the Wabash." Organist Welch presented his composition on the new Wurlitzer, "The Elements," describing scenes around a northern army camp and a southern army camp along the Swannee River winding up with all kinds of sounds possible in a thunder and rain storm. Townsley conducted the "William Tell Overture."

Next week's column will continue the theater history of Terre Haute.

Projectionist wore natty uniform

What were the first great movie stars doing in 191

4 Clark, Dorothy Q Theaters (Indiana)

T S JUL 07 1991

Historically speaking

Clark retired as The Tribune-Star's women's editor in 1980. She has written a local history column since 1956. She is Vigo County Historian.

By Dorothy J. Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

An undated clipping pasted in an old scrapbook given to me by Mr. and Mrs. Harold Anton Wilson furnished so much information about the Barhydts, their activities in Terre Haute, and details of local theaters.

One clipping told of P.T. Blackburn, a curtain artist hired to refurbish the large asbestos fire screen at the Indiana Theater. His job was to make the asbestos curtain look like velour and at the same time blend with the Spanish decor of the theater.

Blackburn's curtain design was borrowed from the design theme on the house walls. He used watercolors because oils could not be used on the asbestos curtain. One challenge was to create the appearance of fringe, where there was none, at the bottom of the curtain.

A novel feature of the Indiana was the location of the picture projecting machine and operator. This very important individual was placed in the center of the theater, all encased in a glass house. He wore a natty uniform, and his every move could be witnessed by patrons in the inner circle.

The projectors were used in showing beautiful nature pictures which had proved so popular at the New York theaters.

Another innovation in the Indiana was the removal of the orchestra from the pit to the stage. The screen was above the heads of the musicians.

At the rear of the house was a large foyer furnished with chairs and couches and decorated with palms. The foyer was neglected in most motion picture houses, but not in Terre Haute. Because of more frequent performances, people visited a movie house at almost any time, and the foyer made a pleasant place to wait until the beginning of the feature.

Famous Players were providing the same program in Terre Haute as in large cities. They were in charge of the American, the Orpheum, and the Indiana. Famous Players studios were increasing their output to 104 pictures annually, and were establishing new studios in Bombay at that time.

The history of Paramount, which embraced Famous Players, Lasky Corp., and their affiliated interests reads like fiction. The story of the rise of W.S. Butterfield, Adolph Zukor, Jesse L. Lasky, Cecil B. DeMille and their associates, pioneers in the motion picture work, is the story of a stupendous organization which evolved from an idea.

This organization which controlled the policy of the Indiana Theater was celebrating its 10th anniversary.

Adolph Zukor was an exhibitor in the days when motion pictures were dying of their own mediocrity. The novelty was gone. Authors and actors of ability viewed it with scorn. Worthwhile theaters would have none of it. "Picture houses" were remodeled storerooms or "reformed" concert halls.

Intelligent, discriminating people longed for something better. But the film manufacturers who controlled the output claimed a patent monopoly and refused to raise the standard of their productions. Exhibitors were at their

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mercy.

Then Zukor set out to organize a new and better motion picture industry. In 1912, the Famous Players Film Company was born, with Zukor at its head. He vowed to produce the best literature of the stage and library translated to the screen. The motion picture industry was born.

Zukor set about securing great stars of the speaking stage, but they turned a deaf ear. All save Madame Sarah Bernhardt. Zukor and Bernhardt made their screen debut in "Queen Elizabeth," the first great five-reeler ever made. This marked the beginning of the cinema industry.

What were the first great movie stars doing in 1912? Wallace Reid was working as a pick and shovel man on Shoshone dam in Wyoming. Betty Compton was playing around the silver mine in Utah, near her birthplace. Dorothy Dalton was attending Sacred Heart Academy in Chicago. Thomas Meighan was making his debut as a stage actor with Henrietta Crosman in Pittsburgh.

Gloria Swanson returned to Chicago with her family after several years at an army post in Puerto Rico. Agnes Ayres was reigning belle in the town of Carbondale, Ill. William DeMille was writing plays for David Belasco.

Rudolph Valentino was attending a military academy in Taranto, Italy. George Melford made a picture called "The Boer War" and spent $25,000 on it. This was a stupendous price for the day, and almost broke the hearts of Kalem officials.

Beatrice Joy was the prettiest girl in her class at a convent in New Orleans, La. Lila Lee was attending public school in New York City. Lois Wilson was hoping to graduate from Alabama Normal School and become a schoolmarm. Conrad Nagel was giving lectures on the Chattanooga circuit for Redpath Lyceum bureau. Jack Holt was herding cattle on a ranch in Oregon.

The second — or real — dedication of the Indiana Theater on Saturday played to five immense audiences. This one meant a good deal more than the society function of Friday night, for it brought out the people that could be counted on to support the "temple of amusement" which was already the talk of show people the country over.

This $750,000 theater with its unique musical effects, its fine orchestra and special organ was in all the newspapers across the country. Barhydt and Eberson had really produced a theatrical miracle this time.

Architect John Eberson surprised Barhydt with all new offices located in two large rooms on the second floor of the Indiana Theater Co. on the north side with windows on Ohio Street.

The walls had a Tiffany finish, giving the effect of marble. Woodwork, desks, files, chairs and tables were all of birch mahogany. Carpets, according to Shannon Katzenbach of the American Theater, were the green Wilton kind you sink into.

Said to be the best equipped and finest office in town, here Barhydt would direct office business of the Indiana, American and Orpheum theaters. As soon as bids were opened for construction, three of the several business rooms were already leased to Fox & Pfister, Charles A. Huston, and Jefferson News Co.

In a few weeks, readers may enjoy reading a biography of T.W. Barhydt, and learn more of his ability to shake Terre Haute to its very foundations.

1993

* Clark, Dorothy (20A) (F) * [illegible] Opera House

Downtown renovation began in 1870

Terre Haute Opera House big undertaking for small town

TS 12/20/92

Built by the Terre Haute Opera House Co., the city's first opera house opened Dec. 19, 1870. The company was formed March 24, 1869, to "erect a building for the use of general business, and portions of which appropriate for an Opera Hall . . ."

The nine directors divided the initial capital stock of $150,000 into $50 shares. The public subscribed to $100,000 of the company's stock.

It was decided to build the new building on the site of the Spinning Wheel Corner, northeast corner of Fourth and Wabash, that had been destroyed by fire. The idea was to revitalize this downtown area.

James Hook, pioneer local builder, built the Terre Haute Opera House, 80 feet by 135 feet, and designed by J.A. Vrydagh, architect.

The painting contract was awarded to Robert Buckels, who later became Sir Robert Buckels, Lord Mayor of Oxford, England,

Designed to cost $66,000, its actual cost was more than $283,000, heavily mortgaged to an eastern insurance company. It was indeed a bold venture, as the population of Terre Haute was 16,000 at the time.

Seating capacity usually was between 1,300 and 1,400, but as many as 1,800 attended special performances.

Historically speaking

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Plate glass windows on the ground floor measured 6 feet by 10 feet. The building was a five-story stone shell structure, and from one floor to another, there was nothing but wood.

Dressing rooms were constructed of light pine and poplar boards. On each side of the stage were stairways leading down. Under the stage there was nothing but wood, and big oak timbers supported the entire building.

The Grand Opera House had two stage galleries, one a small "supers" gallery, and the other a large gallery for the flymen. Here drop curtains were hung. Above a large gallery was a loft where costumes were stored.

The building had three storerooms on the street floor separated by two narrow stairways that led to the second floor — or main floor. In this case, they actually were stores for the selling of merchandise.

The stage was at the rear of this floor with dressing rooms below. Offstage were the dressing rooms of the star performer on one side, and the property room on the other.

Below the stage on the street floor was a refreshment parlor, often referred to as a fancy saloon.

The family circle was built above the main auditorium, and above it and entered by the stairway were the two galleries.

The upper floors in front of the theater proper were occupied by a doctor and a dentist. The Masonic Lodge had rooms on an upper floor. A drygoods store and a jewelry store occupied the ground floor.

The Opera House really was an elaborate and ornate affair. A great chandelier was lighted by gas set off by a static electrical spark.

It was a magnificent house, well-planned, well-made and finely decorated — the finest in Indiana.

On Dec. 18, 1870, it was opened for public inspection. Town citizens who had traveled abroad hailed it as a "perfect structure for its purpose."

One of the most talented and prominent actors of his time, John E. Owens, was engaged for the two-night dedication performance on Dec. 19, 1870.

Seats were sold at auction, ranging from $25, $10, $6 and $5. Owens portrayed his famous character, "Major Wellington DeBoots," in the play, "Everybody's Friend."

Every seat was sold, and the huge chandelier shed abundant light over Terre Haute's most prominent citizens.

At the time for curtain-raising, J.H. Wood, lessee, appeared with a telegram announcing a delay in the arrival of the troupe. The audience chose to wait, and were entertained by local talent, singers, a speech by Col. W.E. McLean, a barbershop quartet, and a creaming farce in pantomime, until the curtain finally rose at 11 p.m.

Owens arrived, and presented "Everybody's Friend." The next night he presented "Happiest Day of My Life" and "Forty Winks."

Next week's column will continue the saga of the Opera House.

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